

NCCU Survey of International Students


Prof. Chuing P. Chou
Department of Education, NCCU

Prof. Amy Roberts
University of Wyoming, USA

Introduction:

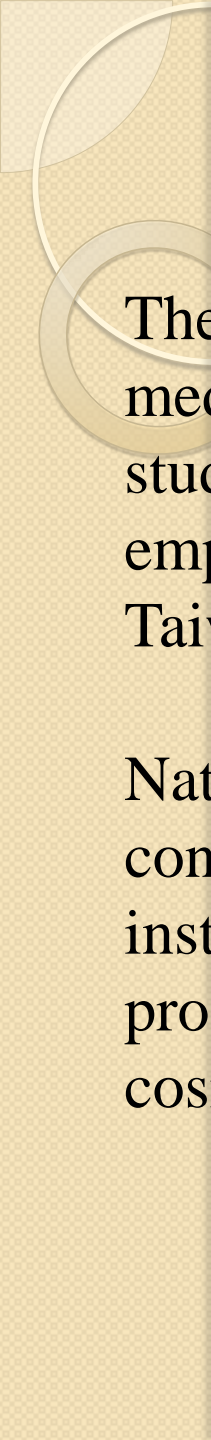
The cross-border mobility of international students has a long tradition in higher education. Historically students migrated internationally to be associated with world renowned scholars or to further a disciplinary knowledge base; in the contemporary era they are more likely to study in the global arena for advancement of degrees, diplomas, or certification.

Global patterns of the cross-border mobility of students encompass a complex, contradictory, and expansive discourse shaped by the discussions, policy issues, and mission statements of individual universities as well as the themes of education policy and global trade within the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).



On the world stage cross-border mobility is defined as a borderless asset of the global education industry; as well as significant element contributing to the transition of university operations to a market-oriented approach.

Until recently the patterns of cross-mobility in Taiwan reflected traditional trends; large numbers of university students from Taiwan studied in the United States and Britain while very few incoming international students chose the island nation as a destination. In recent years the influx of international students in Taiwan has increased significantly.



The entity of Taiwan institutions of higher education, as both mediators and reactors of the increasing influx of international students is a critical area of debate and investigation. Yet to date empirical studies examining the push-pull factors within the Taiwan context are limited.

National Chengchi University (NCCU) in Taipei represents the contribution education has made to the island state. As a leading institution of higher education the NCCU is committed to produce leaders that are humane, professional, innovative and cosmopolitan for the 21st century.

Research Objectives:

1. To determine the demography of NCCU international students
2. To determine the push & pull factors of NCCU international students
3. To provide an opportunity for the international students to share their thoughts and opinions on their educational experiences in NCCU & Taiwan

Theoretical Framework:

Cross-border mobility is defined as a borderless asset of the global education industry; as well as significant element contributing to the transition of university operations to a market-oriented approach (Kwiek, 2005). These global trends are examined in terms of push-pull factors that encourage students to study in particular nations and universities (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

Push factors are defined as elements of a source country that initiate students' decisions to pursue international study. These factors can also be considered as the networks and norms of the students' social capital within their source country.

Pull factors are the characteristics of a host country that attract international students.

Research Methodology:

Stage I

Focus group interviews - Themes generation



Stage II

Survey (Mandarin Study Program Students)



Stage III

Online Survey (Degree Seeking & Exchange Program International Students)



Stage IV

Data analysis and Documentation

Research Process & Timeline:

Activities	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Background literature reviews								
Phase 1 – Focus group interviews								
Drafting of initial survey								
Phase 2 – Survey (Mandarin study program students)								
Data analysis for Phase 2								
Drafting of NCCUSIS								
Phase 3 - Online survey - NCCUSIS								
Data analysis and final drafting of report								

Stage I – Focus group interviews

1. Challenging aspects in studying Mandarin Chinese
2. Rewarding aspects in studying abroad
3. Choosing NCCU & Taiwan as a destination of study
4. Problems encountered in NCCU & Taiwan
5. Future plans

Stage II – Survey (Mandarin Study Program Students)

Part I – Student's profile

Part II – Scholarship information

Part III – International experiences

Part IV – Work history

Part V – Challenges & reasons in studying abroad

Part VI – Experiences in NCCU & Taiwan

Stage III – Online Survey (Degree Seeking & Exchange Program Students)

Section A – Student's profile

Section B – Study abroad reasons and experiences

Section C – Living arrangements in NCCU

Section D – Educational experiences in NCCU

Section E – Life since you arrived in Taiwan

Results and Implications:

Participants

Phase 1	Focus group interview	25
Phase 2	Paper Survey	45
Phase 3	Online Survey	143
Overall		213 of 564 38%

What are the implications of the push-pull factors for incoming international students in Taiwan?

Promotion of NCCU Mandarin study program and other internationalized course programs, which are considered the competitive advantage of NCCU by the international student community.

In addition, the presence of international students contributes to the enhancement of NCCU's cultural and international dimensions.

What are the leading benefits and challenges for the NCCU in regard to the presence of international students on the campus?

International students place much importance in experiencing a new culture and learning a new language outside their home country. They value their own preferences in choosing a place of study, however, the issues like Mandarin Chinese language studies, scholarship availability, quality of education in Taiwan, and many other factors all contributed in influencing their school choice.

Similarly, these also indicate that the government efforts in encouraging international students to study in Taiwan by means of providing attractive scholarships are working effectively.

How are international student experiences shaped by the ongoing interactions between their traditions, worldviews, and values and their position within the NCCU community?

When international students return home, they tend to tell their peers about NCCU. The strength of NCCU can also be seen in the Mandarin study program and internationalized course programs, in addition to the learning environment of the campus, which should be well promoted in the school's website.

Results also suggest that teachers doesn't give any special treatment to international students, individual cultural differences is not an issue in the class, and students get along just well regardless of ethnicity, which are all quite positive. Overall, international students are highly satisfied with their educational experience at NCCU.

How do students define themselves as international learners?

International students define themselves as being encouraged by the following factors:

- experience life outside your home country,
- becoming more mature and independent,
- learning a new language first hand,
- meet new friends,
- opportunity to become a global citizen, and
- experience a new culture.

How does the position of international students on the NCCU campus inform a sense of belonging within the academic community?

Although, international students spent time with local Taiwanese students, however, international students spent most of their time with people from other countries, followed by people from their country.

It would be a challenge to NCCU to organize additional activities between the international students and local Taiwanese students, in order to generate more interaction among them.

In general, Taiwanese local students have a very positive attitude towards foreigners, which is quite promising in attracting international students.

Additional findings:

The English language is consistent to be the first and second language of most international students.

Full fee-paying international students are mostly comprised of students with Asian ethnicity like Malaysian, Japanese, and Korean. Similarly, the exchange program students are mostly comprised of students from Japan, Korea, and the US. However, scholarship recipients are students coming from all over the world.

Additional findings:

Scholarship recipients are mostly consists of children of good family background and status in their home country. These results clearly suggest that students coming from a good family background with parents exposed to higher education tend to encouraged their children to study abroad.

International students generally consider pronunciation, writing, and memorizing Chinese characters as moderate to very challenging. In addition, international students would prefer learning the traditional characters rather than the simplified characters.

Thank you very much!!!